

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 02934 271349Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-01 SP-02 /026 W

-----069710 272147Z /73

R 271340Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7248

USICA WASHDC

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EO 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: MFA PRESS CHIEF ON MEDIA

REF: A-006

1. EU DEPUTY DIRECTOR ARNOLD AND PAO PAID COURTESY CALL ON MFA PRESS CHIEF WOLFGANG MEYER APRIL 25 AND IN RESPONSE TO HIS DETAILED QUESTIONS DESCRIBED NEW ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF ICA. WHEN INFORMED OF ICA'S DUAL MISSION, MEYER ASKED WHAT MEANS WERE TO BE EMPLOYED IN INFORMING AMERICANS ABOUT GDR AND A DISCUSSION OF EVENTS SUCH AS UPCOMING DRESDEN ART EXHIBIT AND BROAD RANGE OF IV GRANTS FOLLOWED.

2. MEYER ADMITTED TOTAL UNAWARENESS OF IV OFFERS, SINCE THESE HAD ALWAYS BEEN MADE TO MFA'S CULTURAL SECTION, ON INSTRUCTIONS OF MFA PROTOCOL, AND INQUIRED ESPECIALLY ABOUT SYRACUSE TV PROJECT. HE CONCLUDED WITH SPECIFIC REQUEST THAT ALL DETAILS BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO HIS OFFICE AND PROMISED PROMPT ACTION.

3. ARNOLD RAISED PROBLEMS OF IMAGE, COMMENTED ON NEGATIVE
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TIVE COVERAGE OF US IN GDR MEDIA, AND RELATED THESE TO ISSUES OF ACCREDITATION AND TO EXPLOITIVE TREATMENT OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS BY GDR. MEYER RESPONDED WITH CUSTOMARY ARGUMENTS, NAMELY THAT VISITING US JOURNALISTS FREQUENTLY CAME WITH ANTI-GDR BIAS, RELATED TO WHICH WAS NEED FOR FULLY-ACCREDITED JOURNALISTS RESIDENT IN BERLIN TO PROVIDE DEPTH TO ON-SCENE REPORTING.

4. IN DISCUSSION ON OTHER MEANS OF PROVIDING SOME BALANCE TO BILATERAL MEDIA REPORTING, ARNOLD POINTED TO EXTENSIVE POSITIVE PRE-OPENING COVERAGE IN US OF DRESDEN ART WHICH MEYER ACKNOWLEDGED. PAO RECOMMENDED FOR MEYER'S CONSIDERATION PLACEMENT IN GDR PRESS OF TEXTS AND FEATURES ON WASHINGTON OPENING TRANSMITTED SAME DAY ON WIRELESS FILE. MEYER ACCEPTED PROPOSAL AND ASKED THAT ALL WF MATERIALS ON DRESDEN EXHIBIT BE SUBMITTED HIS OFFICE.

4. COMMENT: WHILE MEYER'S REPUTATION WITH JOURNALISTS AND PRESS ATTACHES CONTINUES TO BE POOR AND HE IS OFTEN SPOKEN OF IN PERJORATIVE TERMS BECAUSE OF HIS WATCHDOG ROLE (SEE REFAIR), HE APPEARS TO ENJOY CONTACT WITH AMERICAN COLLEAGUES, PERHAPS EXPLAINED BY HIS YEARS AS GDR CORRESPONDENT AT THE UN, ABOUT WHICH HE LIKES TO REMINISCE. THROUGHOUT THE MEETING, HIS MANNER WAS EXCEPTIONALLY CORDIAL. IN RECENT MONTHS HE HAS DISPLAYED WILLINGNESS TO INCREASE PERSONAL CONTACT ON PRESS MATTERS. HIS UNAWARENESS OF IV GRANTS COMES AS NO SURPRISE SINCE THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS OF RIVALRY BETWEEN MFA'S PRESS AND CULTURAL DEPARTMENTS. ALTHOUGH PROTOCOL HAD ALWAYS INSISTED THAT THE CULTURAL DEPARTMENT WAS THE PAO'S OFFICIAL POINT OF CONTACT ON ALL MATTERS, MEYER'S INSTRUCTION THAT HE BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE FOCAL POINT ON PRESS MATTERS IS WELCOME AND OVERRIDING AND OPENS UP A NEW AND PERHAPS MORE RESPONSIVE CHANNEL. ALEXANDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BERLIN02934
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780181-0013
Format: TEL
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780412/aaaaajfa.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b548bda6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2834390
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MFA PRESS CHIEF ON MEDIA
TAGS: SOPN, MFA, (MEYER, WOLFGANG)
To: STATE ICA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b548bda6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014